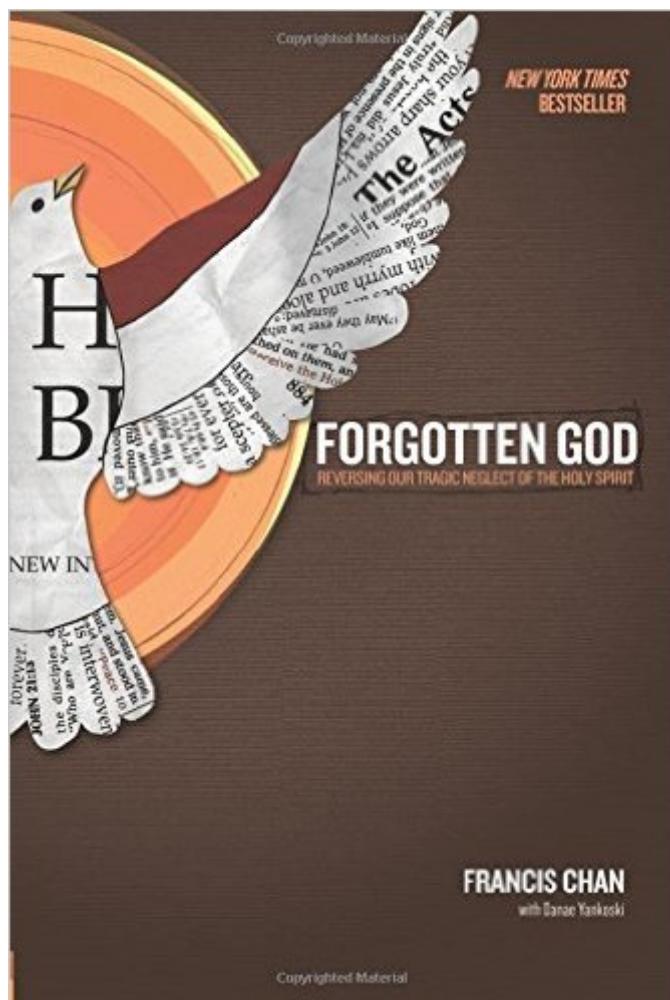


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Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect Of The Holy Spirit



Synopsis

A follow up to the profound message of *Crazy Love*, Pastor Francis Chan offers a compelling invitation to understand, embrace, and follow the Holy Spirit's direction in our lives. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We pray in the name of all three, but how often do we live with an awareness of only the first two? As Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit "the Helper" so that we could be true and living witnesses for Christ. Unfortunately, today's church has admired the gift but neglected to open it. Breakthrough author Francis Chan rips away paper and bows to get at the true source of the church's power "the Holy Spirit. Chan contends that we've ignored the Spirit for far too long, and we are reaping the disastrous results. Thorough scriptural support and compelling narrative form Chan's invitation to stop and remember the One we've forgotten, the Spirit of the living God.

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Customer Reviews

"Another book on the Holy Spirit? You have got to be kidding me!" Those were the initial thoughts that crept into my mind when I first saw the subtitle of Francis Chan's new book *Forgotten God*. It is subtitled "Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit." But then again, after reading Francis' other book, *Crazy Love*, blogging about it and then offering a small group study of it, I was not about to write this new book off as just a dusty old rehash of "Holy Spirit talk." Man, am I glad I didn't! I will have to confess something right up front: I was stoked because of the author...so much so that I had trouble putting this book down. I took it everywhere with me just in case I had little snippets of time

to read and highlight it. Oftentimes authors writing about the Holy Spirit take one of two approaches: they sensationalize everything and make it overly emotional, almost confrontational. You know...if you don't have this or do this then there must be something wrong with your spirituality. The other approach is one that brings yawns to people like me who just want something practical, something that translates into preaching and teaching and the everyday life of people I pastor. Unequivocally, Francis did not disappoint! He laid down the gauntlet on the very first page of his introduction: "the benchmark of success in church services has become more about attendance than the movement of the Holy Spirit. The 'entertainment' model of church was largely adopted in the 1980s and '90s, and while it alleviated some of our boredom for a couple of hours a week, it filled our churches with self-focused consumers rather than self-sacrificing servants attuned to the Holy Spirit." (p.

Calling the Holy Spirit "Forgotten God" may be a bit of an overstatement. Or perhaps it is an understatement. Some Christians seem to show little evidence that they have any theology of the Spirit while others seem to emphasize the Spirit at the expense of other biblical doctrine. What seems clear is that few Christians have it quite right. In this new book Francis Chan says, "From my perspective, the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten. While no evangelical would deny His existence, I'm willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced His presence or action in their lives over the past year. And many of them do not believe they can." With the entertainment (or perhaps "edutainment") model of church so prevalent today, churches have become filled with self-focused consumers instead of Spirit-filled believers. Chan asks this provocative question: "What if you grew up on a desert island with nothing but the Bible to read?" If you had nothing but Scripture to guide you, would your understanding of the Holy Spirit be far different from what it is today? It is probably worth thinking about. Says Chan, "If I were Satan and my ultimate goal was to thwart God's kingdom and purposes, one of my main strategies would be to get churchgoers to ignore the Holy Spirit." It is easy to fake the presence of the Spirit, isn't it? "Let's be honest: If you combine a charismatic speaker, a talented worship band, and some hip, creative events, people will attend your church. Yet this does not mean that the Holy Spirit of God is actively working and moving in the lives of the people who are coming.

The Holy Spirit is one of my favorite topics. Since rediscovering Him in my early twenties, I've pursued a life full of His presence: His fruits, His power, and above all else His love. The infilling of the Spirit and a life spent hearing the voice of the Counselor has become of top priority to me, and

so I find any reading material on the subject, regardless of evangelical or pentecostal viewpoint, to be interesting and worthwhile. Chan is somewhere between the two camps (but certainly more Evangelical than Charismatic) and attempts to walk the line between those two distinct groups of Christiandom. Chan's primary argument is that many modern churches lack presence of the Holy Spirit because of a failure in willingness to let Him do and be who He is--out of fear, out of lack of knowledge, or because of church tradition. Chan argues compellingly that the fullness of what it means to be a Christ follower is lost without the presence of the Holy Spirit. In a series of succinct and to the point chapters, he writes about why we need the Holy Spirit, who He is, and what it looks like when He is operating unencumbered in our lives. Where the book is less satisfying is Chan's reluctance to engage with the debate surrounding the work of the Holy Spirit in the modern day church. He does not identify himself as a cessationist, but the fact that he doesn't even mention tongues, and that he spends an entire book describing the work of the Holy Spirit largely in terms of internal, personal change instead of radical, world impacting power through signs, wonders, and miracles leads me to believe he is very Evangelical in his views, if not a complete cessationist.

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